

# The HHSA Connection

APRIL 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Working for Kids - Making Sure Our Children are Cared for and Protected, and Working for Communities - Promoting Health and Wellness!

## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

### *Safe Children and Healthy Families are a Shared Responsibility*

**A**nurturing home environment, safe places to play and good medical care are the key ingredients that keep children safe and healthy. The primary responsibility for children's well being rests with parents, but they cannot do it alone. All families can benefit from the support of their neighborhoods and communities. We all play a role in helping children to thrive.

During April, the Commission on Children, Youth and Families will sponsor events to promote this year's national theme, "Safe Children and Healthy Families are a Shared Responsibility."

To kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month the Commission will sponsor a Forum on April 5th at Marina Village to honor and recognize professionals in the field. The keynote speaker, **Joe Price**, will educate the audience on "Evidence Based Approaches to Parent Education." On April 30, the Fourth Annual Parenting Conference "Celebrating Families" will be held at the Scottish Rite Temple.

Be one of the STARS in your community working to enhance children's safety and support children and youth.

**S**upport children and parents in your community

**T**ake a positive perspective

**A**ddress the issues

**R**ecognize that parenting can be challenging and offer support

**S**trengthen coping skills

**National Volunteer Week - April 17-23** - One great volunteer opportunity is the Foster Youth Mentor Program. Currently 14 county employees volunteer as mentors for foster children. There are 200 children being mentored, but 400 more are waiting. Contact Jannette Kutchins, at (858) 616-5930. [Child Abuse Hotline](#) [Youth Mentor Program](#)

### CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN

#### It's All in the Details

#### Helping Medi-Cal Applicants

**B**eing an eligibility worker handling Medi-Cal mail-in applications is a complicated job, but Sharon Tracy is up to the task.

Tracy receives mail-in applications for Medi-Cal, determines their eligibility, then either grants or denies the application.

"The number of applications we get each month varies," she says. "It can be as low as 30 or as high as 50."

Tracy has to ensure that the proper documents are secured and sometimes has to spend a lot of time on the phone with applicants helping them get everything they need.

Tracy is a 16-year County employee, having worked three years at the FRC, and 13 years in Animal Control.

She keeps up her interest in animals by co-owning two therapy dogs, Rottweilers named Cara and Tucker. Tracy takes Cara to visit Grossmont Hospital every Friday. The dog goes to the cancer center, intensive care unit and ambulatory infusion center to cheer up patients and visitors.



Tracy works at the El Cajon Family Resource Center

### A Message from Jean Shepard Agency Director

**S**ome of you have seen the status reports for Quality First, through December 2004. We are on track to meet many of the goals established for this fiscal year. However, there are several areas in each performance group that are lagging behind the established targets.

The Quality First program provides an incentive to improve our current performance. All of the targets represent a stretch goal to increase performance over the baseline established last year. It is important that we all work as a team to meet our goals.

For more information about FY 04/05 goals, please visit the [Quality First Web page](#) on the HHSA Intranet, or contact your supervisor, manager, union representative or the HHSA Organization Development Office at (858) 495-5390.



*Jean Shepard*

## South Region

Working for Kids - Making Sure Children are Healthy!

### Sealing the Dental Deal

#### *South Region Children Have Something to Smile About*

In celebration of "National Children's Dental Health Month," a free dental clinic was offered on February 26, 2005, in South Region to provide dental sealants and fluoride varnish to children. More than 300 children with no dental resources received treatments, valued at \$35,360. The event was held at the new 18-chair Southwestern College Dental Hygiene Program in National City. The event supports the "Something to Smile About" program initiated by San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman **Pam Slater-Price**.

Tooth decay is the most common infectious disease among children, accounting for more than 51 million school hours lost annually in the nation. Unfortunately, many children do not receive routine dental care and prevention services because they do not have a regular dentist. A recent study of children (grades 2 through 5) in the South Bay found that 30% had untreated cavities and 74% had active gum disease. Painting dental sealants and fluoride varnish on teeth is a safe and painless way to help prevent cavities.

District One San Diego County Supervisor **Greg Cox**, who attended the event, commented, "Tooth decay is epidemic among children. We need innovative programs that will help us address the problem right here, in our community. This clinic is a great example of how public/private partnerships can come together to improve the health of children."

The San Diego County Dental Society and The Dental Health Initiative-Share the Care coordinated and provided funding for the event, in collaboration with South Region, the San Diego County Dental Hygienists's Society, the San Diego County Office of Education, Southwestern College Dental Hygiene Program, Mesa Community College, and UCSD.



From left: Peggy Yamagata RDH, MEd., Share the Care Program Manager; Supervisor Greg Cox; Tooth Fairy Mary Naghdi, Southwestern Dental Hygiene Student; South Region General Manager Rene Santiago; Christine Perri RDH, MA, Director of Southwestern Dental Hygiene Program; and Roger Tibbets DDS, volunteer dentist

## North Central Region

Working for Kids - Making Sure Children are Healthy, and Working for Communities - Promoting Health and Wellness!

### Speeding up Services for Kids

#### *New Automated System Implemented*

With headquarters in North Central Region and serving children countywide, the California Children Services (CCS) program authorizes and pays for specific medical services and equipment provided by approved specialists to children with certain physical limitations and chronic health conditions or diseases.

In July 2004, CCS implemented a new State-automated Service Authorization Request (SAR) system. The new system allows medical providers to electronically submit claims for payment via the Internet, which dramatically decreases provider reimbursement time from three months (using paper claims) to 10 days (for SAR generated correct claims). SAR is expected to improve provider relations and increase the number of providers wanting to serve CCS children.

The new SAR system affects both CCS case management and the Medical Therapy Program



(MTP). CCS case management staff process requests for medical services. The case management staff consists of Public Health Nurses (PHNs) determining medical eligibility, Human Services Specialists (HSSs) determining financial and residential eligibility, and Intermediate Clerks providing support to the PHNs and HSSs. The MTP is a special program within CCS that provides direct occupational and physical therapy for children with eligible conditions. Therapy services are provided at rehabilitation units located in six public schools throughout San Diego County to children with eligible conditions from birth to 21 years of age.

SAR, when fully implemented, will eliminate the need for CCS to review and approve payment for medical claims allowing staff to focus exclusively on the child's medical needs. This will dramatically reduce the time it takes for providers to receive their payments and potentially increase the number of providers willing to treat CCS eligible children.



### Applauding those Who Work for Kids

#### *Access to Care for Children Team (ACT) Recognition Event*

**O**n February 22, the Access to Care for Children Team (ACT) Initiative members received well-deserved accolades. HHSA Deputy Directors **Nick Macchione** and **Joan Zinser** recognized the members for the valuable expertise, input, and time they dedicated toward the Initiative's proposal development phase. The Agency-wide initiative works to improve access to healthcare coverage programs for children. More than fifty employees, from line staff to Assistant Deputy Directors, have participated in the creative brainstorming process necessary to create an aggressive and well-balanced action plan.

The ACT Initiative will eagerly move forward with the implementation phase and institute a number of recommended strategies. By 2007, the ACT Initiative aims to enroll approximately 60,000-65,000 uninsured children who are eligible but not currently enrolled in Medi-Cal or Healthy Families healthcare programs.

For more information about the ACT Initiative, please contact **Susanne Boston** at (760) 967-4567.



## Compliance Office

### How is Your Personal Information Protected?

#### *Electronic Health Records May Allow for Increased Privacy and Security*

**N**ational Health Information Privacy and Security Week, April 10-16, is designed to raise awareness among healthcare professionals, their employers, and the public of the importance of protecting the privacy and security of personal health information as the healthcare industry adopts new technologies.

With the attention **President Bush** focused on electronic health records (EHR) in his State of the Union address in 2004, and his establishment of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, the reality of an EHR for every American has become more likely. As President Bush stated: "By computerizing health records, we can avoid dangerous medical mistakes, reduce costs and improve care."

Three key factors are:

1. **Access Management:** Access to a paper record is managed by its location and the security around

where it physically exists. If someone is in the records location, they could possibly have access. With an EHR, authorization to electronically access health information is strictly based on job-related needs.

2. **Password Management:** Healthcare organizations using EHR are required by the federal Security Rule to have adequate management procedures to address creating, changing, and safeguarding passwords.

3. **Audit Trails:** EHR audit trails can track who has accessed patient information, and identify everyone who has reviewed a particular record.

If you have questions regarding the County of San Diego's policies and procedures on privacy and security of health information, please contact:

**Cynthia Paes**, County Privacy Officer  
(619) 515-4243  
Cynthia.Paes@sdcounty.ca.gov

**Pilar Miranda**, HHSA Information Security Manager  
(619) 338-2806  
Pilar.Miranda@sdcounty.ca.gov

## Students Can Say YES to their Futures

### *Technology and Career Information Center Offers Great Tools*

**T**he San Pasqual Academy's Qualcomm Technology and Career Information Center is a hub of activity. Workforce Partnership, Casey Family Programs, ACCESS, Junior Achievement, and the California Employment Development Department staff the Tech Center. These partners comprise the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Program, which offers Academy students an array of services.

The program provides students assistance with college, scholarship, and financial aid applications. Students also have access to Coin3, an Internet-based system, which allows them to research college and career choices, learn about financial aid resources, receive tutoring on college entrance exams, and obtain career assessment profiles. College and career fairs are hosted by the program every spring and fall.

Employment preparation is also offered. A Certificate of Work Readiness program is available to students over the age of 15, and is recognized by employers throughout California. The program also matches students with internships and employment on- and off-campus, and provides them support to maintain these positions. Pre-Employment Training (PET) provides 13- and 14-year old students the foundation necessary to find, apply for, and maintain employment through a certified curriculum.

Elective classes such as multi-media production, computer applications, and career exploration are also offered. Weekly writing seminars and seasonal workshops such as income tax preparation add to the services available at the Tech Center. Our Academy students are building their futures through these exciting, diverse services.



San Pasqual Academy's high-tech gateway to promising futures

# Central Region

## Stepping Out for Wellness

### *Everyone is Welcome to Join in the Fitness*

**T**he Central Region is planning a spring kickoff in April for "Walking Wellness." The goal is to establish walking groups in each of Central Region's workplace facilities. Recruitment of motivated volunteer employees is ongoing to help promote these groups. Materials, schedules and incentives will be provided.

In October 2004, a pilot program was implemented at the Public Health Center. With highly motivated employees and a well-organized facilitator, a group of 10 Public Health Nurses and staff walked a total of 476 miles in 12 weeks. Flexibility was key to keeping the momentum going and, despite the challenges of one of the busiest times of year with holidays, vacations, flu season and rain, the group continued to walk. Congratulations to all the participants for stepping out. With some spirited discussion, the Public Health Center group agreed to call themselves WWOW, "Workers Walking on Wednesday."

Some of the benefits of walking at work include improved fitness consistency and reinforced behaviors of a healthy lifestyle. It allowed time for co-workers to de-stress and have an enjoyable time away from desks and phones. A new component of this effort is the availability of At-Work Weight Watchers programs.

Central Region hopes to inspire more walking groups with many employees taking lots of great steps toward improved health. If you are interested in one or both of these components, please call **Elise Lorentz** at (619) 338-2053.





## Empowering Americans to Live Stronger, Longer

### National Public Health Week, April 4-10

**T**his year, National Public Health Week focuses on reducing the barriers that keep older Americans from getting the health care and information they need. For this segment of the population, living longer, stronger means maintaining and improving their quality of life - not just extending it. This year's campaign will promote the three P's in adding more healthy years to life: **Prevent** problems from happening, **Protect** your health through early detection, and **Plan** to stay healthy.

Public Health Services, Aging and Independence, Alcohol and Drug Services, and Mental Health Services have collaborated to convene events at four senior centers throughout the county. Each event has

one of the P's as its focus. The specific schedule of events is as follows:

**Monday, April 4th**, a kick-off event will be held at the Clairemont Friendship Senior Center from 11:15 a.m. to Noon.

**Tuesday, April 5th**, Prevention focus at Senior Community Centers of San Diego in Downtown San Diego from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, April 6th**, Protection focus at Joslyn Senior Center in Escondido from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

**Thursday, April 7th**, Planning focus at the Lemon Grove Senior Center from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

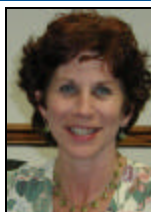
**Friday, April 8th**, Public Health Champion Awards Ceremony at the County Administration Center from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

## HHSA Shining Stars

### Working for Operational Excellence!

**N**orth Regions Facilities Manager **Mindy Ripley** received the Arthritis Foundation's 2004 Volunteer of the Year Award on February 24. She was given the award in recognition of her hard work and dedication in co-chairing the 2004 American Juvenile Arthritis Organization National Conference.

**T**he National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter, Region E honored **Alfredo Aguirre**, Director of Mental Health Services for San Diego County as its 2005 Social Worker of the Year. The award celebrates exemplary contributions through broad professional social work and demonstrated leadership in the field.



**ADS Has Moved** - Alcohol and Drug Services is now co-located with Mental Health Services Administration at the following address:

3255 Camino del Rio South (619) 584-5007 - main number  
San Diego, CA 92108 (619) 584-5080 - fax

**Children In Need is now Online!** Children In Need, Inc., is a nonprofit organization under the guidance of HHSA staff. It provides financial support to assist disadvantaged children who are unable to participate in enrichment activities (such as sports, memberships, and lessons). Any HHSA worker can apply for assistance for any child in their caseload. See [www.childreninneedsd.org](http://www.childreninneedsd.org) for more information.

**Compliance Office: (619)515-4244 Toll-Free Hotline: (866)549-0004**

*An ethical workplace is your right...and your responsibility.*

**Director's Call-In** - Share your ideas and concerns with HHSA Director Jean Shepard on the **first Friday of each month, from 8:00 a.m. - noon, at (619) 515-6555**

**Have Some News?** Please submit article ideas to your section editor listed below, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail.



**County of San Diego**  
Health and Human Services Agency

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